

Physical Activity: What You Should Know



At least 60% of women are not meeting the recommended amount of at least 30 minutes a day of physical activity such as brisk walking.

You don't have to be as fit as a professional athlete to benefit from physical activity. A total of 30 minutes of physical activity on most days can greatly improve your health.

A growing number of women are overweight or obese. Being overweight or obese increases your risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, arthritis, and some cancers.

Benefits of Physical Activity:

- Reduces your risk of dying from heart disease or stroke
- Lowers your risk of getting heart disease, colon cancer, and diabetes
- Lowers high blood pressure
- Helps keep your bones, muscles, and joints healthy
- Reduces anxiety and depression.
- Improves your mood.
- Helps you handle stress
- Helps control your weight
- Gives you more energy
- Helps you sleep better
- Helps you look better

Getting Started:

If you're not active at all or have a medical problem, talk with your health care provider first. Start your program with short sessions (5 to 10 minutes) of physical activity and build up to your goal. Before you start your activity, be sure to warm up. Use the right equipment - whether it's walking shoes, running shoes, or knee pads and make sure it's in good condition and the right fit for you.

Drink water before, during, and after you are active. At the end of your activity, cool down by decreasing the intensity of your activity so your heartbeat is normal. Be sure to stretch. If your chest feels tight or painful, or if you feel faint or have trouble breathing at any time, stop the activity right away and talk to your health care provider.

Steps to Get You Moving:

- Choose an activity that is fun.
- Change your activities so you don't get bored.
- Doing housework may not be fun, but it does get you moving! So does gardening, yard work and walking the dog.
- If you can't set aside one block of time, do short activities during the day, such as three, 10 minute walks.
- Create opportunities for activity, such as taking the elevator instead of the stairs, parking your car farther away, or walking down the hall to talk to a coworker instead of using e-mail.

Every Woman Matters Can Help You Get Active:

The Every Woman Matters Program can help you receive a free or low-cost health exam that includes educational opportunities related to changing and maintaining healthy behaviors such as being physically active and eating a healthy diet.

In addition to breast and cervical cancer screenings, clients ages 40 through 64 are eligible for blood pressure, blood cholesterol, and diabetes screening. Clients screened for heart disease and diabetes are eligible to participate in activities for healthy living.

Additional Resources:

Healthier US.gov

www.healthierus.gov

President's Council on Physical Fitness & Sports

www.fitness.gov

Obesity Education Initiative, National Heart, Lung, & Blood Institute

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/oei

For More Information:

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